

A NEW WHITE-FLOWERED FORM
AND CULTIVAR OF *ILLICIUM FLORIDANUM*
(ILLICIACEAE) IN THE SOUTHEASTERN
UNITED STATES

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ABSTRACT

Illicium floridanum f. *album* is described as a rare albino form of the Florida anise. Differences between the typical form with reddish purple flowers and the form with white flowers are detailed. The cultivar 'Semmes' is described as a clonal selection derived from *I. floridanum* f. *album* as the wild progenitor. The cultivar was introduced to the nursery trade as a select horticultural plant in 1988.

***Illicium floridanum* Ellis f. *album* F.G. Mey. & Mazzeo, f. nov.**

Distinguitur tepalis eburneis et foliis paulo viridibus, petiolis pallidis ad virides.

Evergreen, glabrous shrub, ca. 2 m in height. Leafy twigs of new growth green. Leaves alternate, simple, aromatic; petioles 1 – 2 cm long, pale green; blades coriaceous, narrowly elliptic, cuneate at the base, acute to acuminate, 9 – 17 cm long, 2.1 – 4.8 cm wide, broadest at or slightly above the middle, entire, minutely glandular-dotted beneath. Flowers usually solitary in leaf axils, with a strong foetid "wet dog" odor, peduncles 3 – 8 cm long, the bud scales 3 – 6, becoming reflexed, broadly ovate and obtuse, glandular-dotted on the outside and ciliate, caducous. Tepals 8 – 21, narrowly oblong, dilated at base, acute or obtuse at the tip, spreading, 2 – 2.8 cm long, 2 – 4 mm wide, white. Stamens numerous, 28 – 36, cream-white. Follicles 10 – 15, separate, 1-seeded, explosively dehiscent.

TYPE: UNITED STATES. MISSISSIPPI. Lawrence Co.: understory in woodland, top of embankment along a stream on W side of rte. 27, ca. 0.4 mi N of US 84, NW of Monticello, 14 Apr 1988, *Mazzeo and Dodd* 3168 (HOLOTYPE: NA; ISOTYPE: A).

Additional specimens examined: FLORIDA: Liberty Co.: steephead, N of Bristol, 18 Apr 1982, *Gholson and Godfrey* 9600 (FSU); S side of Little Sweetwater Creek, 16 Apr 1982, *Leonard, Baker and Godfrey* 7707 (FSU).

Intermediate with pink tepals. FLORIDA: Liberty Co.: near mouth of ravine, SW of Alum Bluff, 16 Apr 1982, *Leonard, Baker and Godfrey* 7707 *pro parte* (FSU).

Illicium (ANISE TREE) in the southeastern United States is a genus of two species: *I. parviflorum* Michx. ex Vent., confined to central Florida (Lake, Marion, Polk, and Volusia counties), and *I. floridanum*, more widespread in the Florida panhandle



FIG. 1. *Illicium floridanum* Ellis f. *album* F.G. Mey. & Mazzeo 'Semmes.'

from the Ocklockonee River westward to SW Georgia, the coastal plain of Alabama and Mississippi to SE Louisiana.

Typically, the flowers of *I. floridanum* have pale reddish bud scales, purplish red to deep red tepals, and reddish petioles. About 1975 an isolated plant with white tepals, lighter green leaves, and green petioles was discovered near Monticello, Lawrence Co., Mississippi, growing near plants of *I. floridanum* with typical purplish red to red tepals. Elsewhere, Godfrey (1988) reported both the white-flowered and the intermediate pink-flowered forms growing in ravines east of the Apalachicola River in Liberty Co., Florida. Until now the albino form has not been recognized botanically. Although of minor biological significance, color forms of flowers have value among horticultural plants as cultivars. For this

primary reason, we recognize the white-flowered form of *Illicium floridanum*, both botanically and as a cultivated plant. The cultivar 'Semmes' is described below:

***Illicium floridanum* Ellis f. *album* F.G. Mey. & Mazzeo cv. 'Semmes' F.G. Mey. & Mazzeo, cv. nov. (Fig. 1)**

CLONOTYPE: UNITED STATES. ALABAMA. Mobile Co.: garden of Tom Dodd III, Wulff Rd., Semmes, 14 Apr 1988, P. M. Mazzeo 3171 (A, AUA, BH, FLAS, GAM, MOR, NA).

'Semmes' is a clonal selection with white flowers, propagated asexually from the type plant of *Illicium floridanum* f. *album* collected in Mississippi (Mazzeo and Dodd 3168). (For other details refer to the description of *I. floridanum* f. *album*.) Asexually propagated material of the clonotype plant (Mazzeo 3171) has been grown and distributed by Tom Dodd Nurseries of Semmes, Mobile Co., Alabama, since 1988, and subsequently by other nurseries in the United States. It is presently in cultivation at the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington, D.C. as NA 38130.

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REFERENCES

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